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IN BRIEF

CORPORATE EVALUATION ON UN WOMEN'S SUPPORT TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES 2022–2025

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the corporate thematic evaluation of UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes.

This evaluation was conducted by UN Women's Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS), which undertakes independent corporate evaluations with the aim of enhancing accountability, informing decision-making and contributing to learning. The evaluation, initiated in May and completed in December 2025, will be presented to the UN Women Executive Board during its Annual Session in June 2026.

Background

Intergovernmental forums provide a space for Member States to discuss and agree on global and regional norms and standards, including those related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. These norms and standards guide actions by governments and stakeholders at global, regional and national levels, influencing the development and improvement of laws, policies and programmes that promote gender equality, rights and women's empowerment. As part of its mandate, UN Women supports Member States by providing technical support, conducting research and sharing best practices and lessons learned to inform intergovernmental

decisions. It also supports policy advocacy; brokers dialogue among key stakeholders; and facilitates the participation of civil society to ensure women's perspectives in intergovernmental spaces. At the request of Member States, UN Women helps to implement standards through country programmes and leads the coordination of UN system-wide efforts to promote gender equality. The current context, characterized by growing backlash on longstanding commitments on women's rights and gender equality and challenges to multilateralism, underscores the relevance of UN Women's intergovernmental support work.

Evaluation purpose, approach and methodology

The purpose of this corporate evaluation was to assess the support that UN Women provided to Member States in relation to key intergovernmental processes between 2022 and 2025 at global, regional and country level to contribute to strategic decision-making, learning and accountability. The evaluation acknowledges that primary responsibility for driving intergovernmental processes and implementing their outcomes lies with Member States, while UN Women's role is strictly supportive.

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the UN Women Executive Board, senior management and programme personnel directly working on or with an interest in UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes.

Methodology

The evaluation employed a theory-informed, mixed methods and "utilization-focused" approach designed to maximize the usefulness of the findings and the process itself for UN Women personnel and their work in this area. A combination of theory-based and utilization-focused evaluation methodologies were employed including contribution analysis and mapping, appreciative inquiry and thematic analysis.

The evaluation relied on a mix of primary and secondary data. Primary data collection included direct observation of events related to intergovernmental processes organized by UN Women Global Offices and the Geneva Office; key informant interviews with 73 interviewees (65 women and 8 men); and three online surveys targeting (i) UN Women Country Offices (39 per cent response rate N=30/76), (ii) internal UN Women personnel working on intergovernmental processes at global and regional levels (65 per cent response rate N=36/55) and (iii) Member State representatives (16 per cent response rate N=14/89). Primary data were collected through a combination of remote and in-person data collection, with in-person interviews held in New York and Geneva and the rest conducted online.

Secondary data were drawn from a detailed portfolio review of UN Women's engagement in intergovernmental processes and a desk review of relevant evaluations, strategic documents and other key reports. In addition to undertaking a comprehensive mapping of UN Women's broader support to intergovernmental processes, to assess contribution to results the evaluation conducted seven case reviews that included four key global processes (the Commission on the Status of Women [CSW], the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the Human Rights Council [HRC] and the Conference of the Parties [COP] to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and three regional processes (African Union processes, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC] Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and intergovernmental processes in the Europe and Central Asia region).

Findings

As part of its objectives, the evaluation mapped the intergovernmental processes that UN Women supported between 2022 and 2025. The mapping exercise identified 29 intergovernmental processes supported and led by different offices across UN Women. The mapping also identified six types of support provided throughout the intergovernmental processes: technical and strategic advisory support; convening and multi-stakeholder engagement; advocacy and political engagement with governments; implementation support; capacity-building and knowledge sharing; and amplification of women's voices including organizational and logistical support for women's group participation at key events. Together with the analytical framework, these six categories were used to assess how UN Women's support contributed to outcomes in intergovernmental processes. While the evaluation has categorized UN Women's support into distinct types, the practical examples often reveal significant overlap. For instance, technical support frequently underpins capacity development initiatives and convening is embedded within efforts to amplify women's perspectives. This interconnectedness reflects the integrated nature of UN Women's

work and mandate, where different support modalities reinforce each other to achieve broader outcomes for gender equality and women's empowerment.

The evaluation found that UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes during 2022–2025 was highly valued by stakeholders, mainly Member States and strategically relevant for advancing global normative framework on women's rights and gender equality; however, it was also constrained by structural and resource limitations.

UN Women's technical and strategic advisory support was consistently identified as one of its most effective contributions to advancing gender-responsive outcomes in intergovernmental spaces. UN Women's evidence-based inputs, most notably the flagship Gender Snapshot, were repeatedly used by Member States to strengthen negotiations across processes such as CSW, HLPF and HRC. UN Women's annual policy guidance to CSW also had demonstrable influence: 91 per cent, 97 per cent and 94 per cent of recommendations from the Secretary General's report were reflected in the Agreed Conclusions in 2022–2024 respectively. UN Women's support to HRC58 was also cited as instrumental in securing a stronger resolution on women and diplomacy.

Convening and multi-stakeholder engagement emerged as a central comparative advantage, reinforcing coherence among governments, UN agencies and civil society. As substantive secretariat of CSW, UN Women convened inclusive high-level dialogues and expert groups that substantially contributed to consensus outcomes and more robust global commitments. At regional level, joint convening with ECLAC enabled Member States to adopt influential agreements such as the 2022 Buenos Aires Commitment and the 2025 Tlatelolco Commitment, elevating "care" as a regional political priority and contributing to a bi-regional Pact for Care between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean. UN Women's support also enabled increased participation of women's civil society organizations (CSOs), including at HRC and COPs.

Strategic collaboration with Member States, UN agencies and CSOs was generally strong and perceived as central to the Entity's effectiveness. Coordination with UNICEF, UNFPA and OHCHR at the HRC sessions facilitated collective responses to the challenges and discussions trying to undermine the longstanding agreements on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, while joint work with ECLAC strengthened regional norm setting processes. However, engagement with CSOs, especially youth-led, rural and disability-focused groups, remained uneven, indicating a need for more institutionalized approaches, especially at regional levels.

The evaluation found that UN Women's unique normative mandate and role as a neutral broker continued to underpin its credibility. Member States consistently recognized the Entity as the authoritative source on gender equality and welcomed its ability to provide guidance, at their request, during negotiations on sensitive issues. The Entity was perceived as strongly including intersectionality in its work, particularly through technical guidance and advocacy for marginalized groups, including indigenous women, women with disabilities and youth. Examples include facilitating indigenous women's participation at HRC sessions supporting OHCHR in the provision of technical assistance to the Committee, notably through the organization of regional consultations and contributing to CEDAW's General Recommendation 40. Nonetheless, sensitivities around LGBTIQ+ rights resulted in inconsistent application of intersectional approaches across regions.

In terms of organizational efficiency, the evaluation found that UN Women introduced effective measures to strengthen coordination and alignment across the organization; however, structural challenges persisted. For instance, in June 2025, UN Women created a new section on Human Rights and Non-Discrimination within the Geneva Office, under the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division, aimed at strengthening coordination and coherence in its work in these areas and ensuring a more direct connection with Regional and Country Offices to further advance accountability for normative commitments at the country level. Other measures to strengthen coordination include the

introduction of regional personnel “sherpas” in 2023, aimed at ensuring that country and regional priorities are systematically reflected or taken into account in intergovernmental processes, while also supporting the implementation of global commitments at the regional level. In parallel, dedicated task forces have been established for major processes, including CSW and COP, to enhance coherence, alignment and follow-through across the system. Nevertheless, structural and coordination challenges were found and perceived by stakeholders, including fragmented internal communication between Global, Regional and Liaison Offices and insufficient communication on standardized processes for CSW preparation. The reliance on regular budget resources for intergovernmental work at a time when those resources have come under increasing pressure, including declining allocations and staffing constraints, was also noted and reiterated as a limitation by stakeholders. This underscored the importance of safeguarding and strengthening the regular budget funding base, while also exploring complementary approaches that can enhance resilience and sustainability in a manner fully consistent with UN Women’s normative mandate.

Assessment of internal UN Women practices showed that monitoring and reporting systems often did not adequately capture contributions to intergovernmental outcomes, limiting visibility of UN Women’s normative impact.

In terms of the translation of global and regional commitments into country-level outcomes, this was found to remain uneven. While many Country Offices embedded intergovernmental work into Strategic Notes, follow-up mechanisms to CSW Agreed Conclusions for example were inconsistent. Strong examples exist, such as the Philippines’ annual CSW Feedback Forum and UN Women’s support leading to adoption of 30 national and local care policies across 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

UN Women demonstrated adaptability and resilience amid growing pushback on longstanding commitments on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, leveraging evidence-based messaging, strengthened partnerships and strategic political analysis to maintain progress, including through its

Secretariat support to the CSW revitalization process and its consensus outcome in 2025. At the same time, the sustainability of intergovernmental support work remains challenged by limited and unpredictable funding, uneven partnerships and broader resource constraints. Stakeholders emphasized the need for more predictable and dedicated financing mechanisms, alongside stronger system-wide coordination to safeguard hard-won gains and ensure continued delivery in an increasingly constrained multilateral environment.

Conclusions

CONCLUSION 1:

UN Women has successfully contributed to raising awareness; delivered technical support; and strengthened collaboration among various stakeholders in intergovernmental processes by effectively using its unique normative role, leading global agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and as the substantive secretariat of CSW, alongside its reputation as a trusted, knowledgeable broker.

Stakeholders highly rated UN Women’s ability to act as a strategic convener and trusted broker to lead multi-stakeholder dialogues. This convening contributed to intergovernmental coherence and the translation of national priorities into normative consensus.

CONCLUSION 2:

UN Women’s approach to partnerships was found to be comprehensive and valuable in supporting intergovernmental work. UN Women’s multi-stakeholder approach ensured that gender equality expertise and women’s perspectives were integrated into diverse intergovernmental processes.

UN Women was perceived to have successfully cultivated trusting, close working relationships with Member States, acting as a constructive partner providing specialized expertise and often supporting Member States to ensure that governments maintain ownership of strong and forward-looking outcomes that advance gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

UN Women's recognized authority for gender equality and its coordination mandate has enabled systematic collaboration within the UN system.

However, some internal organizational challenges have limited coherence. The evaluation found cases of internal fragmentation where coordination between Global and Liaison, Regional and Country Offices limited a fully effective and coherent approach with all partners undertaking this work.

CONCLUSION 3:

During 2025, UN Women introduced a series of innovations to strengthen internal coordination towards a more integrated and cohesive approach. However, there is a need to improve under-leveraged reporting practices and connections between different offices providing intergovernmental support to maximize UN Women's offer in this area.

CONCLUSION 4:

The sustainability of UN Women's support to intergovernmental processes is characterized by effective adaptation and resilience in the face of growing backlash against longstanding commitments on gender equality and declining resources.

To ensure the long-term sustainability of UN Women's intergovernmental support work there is a need for enhanced intergovernmental coordination across the UN system; increased organizational effectiveness in this area, especially in terms of maximizing available financial and human resources; and streamlining the Entity's approach to this type of work. Investing in institutional memory; documenting results and good practices; and inclusive participation of CSOs will also be important to sustain progress in an increasingly challenging multilateral landscape.

Recommendations



RECOMMENDATION 1

UN Women should lead an internal process to develop a strategy for its support to intergovernmental processes that articulates a clear vision, defined roles and responsibilities and includes the intergovernmental support offer at country, regional and global levels. This would strengthen clarity and coherence on how UN Women operates at intergovernmental level across substantive teams. The strategy should be aligned with UN Women's Strategic Plan.



RECOMMENDATION 2

UN Women should strengthen its overall engagement with partners (Member States, CSOs and UN system) by developing a systematic approach to its partnership ecosystem based on existing political engagement strategies. This recommendation emphasizes leveraging UN Women's coordination and convening roles to further enhance use of existing mechanisms (at global, regional and local levels) to formalize joint knowledge products, co-lead joint briefings and co-produce policy papers to promote a unified and integrated approach to gender equality in key intergovernmental processes and spaces. Closer and more systematic partnerships with CSOs should also be developed in the context of intergovernmental work, including through more structured and consistent engagement.

The analysis and recommendations of this evaluation are those of the Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services and do not necessarily reflect the views of UN Women. This is an independent publication by the UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS).